

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, even though our economy is doing well and expansion is continuing, each of us wants to be certain that when it comes time for our retirement Social Security will be there for us. Our current senior citizens need this assurance, the baby boomer generation needs this assurance, and our young people need this assurance.

Cynicism runs deep, as illustrated by the fact that today's young people believe that it is more likely that they will spot a UFO than that they will collect Social Security when their time comes. That is why Republicans are showing true leadership by securing 100 percent of the Social Security Trust Fund for exactly that: saving Social Security. We are committed to strengthening Social Security for years to come.

It is important to note that in the 40 years when the Democrats had control of the House, they took hundreds of billions of dollars from Social Security and spent it on other Federal programs. When Republicans took control in 1994, this ended. We balanced the Federal budget, brought about badly needed discipline in our spending activities. So today we must continue, forge a budget agreement that saves and strengthens Social Security. The progress continues.

EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, this week we will take up H.R. 800, the Education Flexibility Partnership Act. I believe this bill can be improved by amending it to provide for the hiring of 1,000 new teachers.

The need for such an amendment is apparent. Schools across this Nation are struggling because student enrollment has drastically increased. Evidence shows that there is a direct correlation between class size and learning ability. Students in smaller classes, especially in the early grades, make greater educational gains, and maintain those gains over time.

Smaller classes are most advantageous for poor students, minority students, and those living in rural communities. However, all children will benefit from smaller classes.

We need more teachers. It is so critical in maintaining and improving our education system, and more importantly, it indeed is the best flexibility we can provide to our education system.

NUCLEAR UTILITY INDUSTRY IS STRIKING OUT

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, let us talk baseball, for once. America's favorite pastime is upon us here in Washington, D.C. and the rich nuclear utility industry is striking out. Today, they are simply a backstop against common sense.

It seems that Secretary Richardson has pitched a proposal to store nuclear waste safely on site until a permanent storage area can be determined to be suitable. A great idea.

To no one's surprise, the nuclear industry has balked at the plan, because it would be paid for, get this, with their money, heaven forbid, and would avoid the potentially dangerous task of shipping nuclear waste across America. Here was a chance for all America to hit a home run, but once again, it seems the nuclear industry is holding out for a bigger contract just so they can get paid and put money in their fat pockets.

Mr. Speaker, the nuclear industry fat cats are trying to build an expensive, taxpayer-paid lobbyist expansion team. Remember, the ballfield is in your district, the team is your constituents, and it is your responsibility to oppose H.R. 45 so we can win one for all America.

H.R. 835: MAKING THE R&D TAX CREDIT PERMANENT

(Ms. ESHOO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 835, the bill to make permanent the research and development tax credit. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the bill, because making the research and development tax credit permanent will help to maintain the stunning economic expansion that America now enjoys.

The R&D tax credit is in place right now. In fact, the Congress has extended this on a stop-go basis since 1981. The bill making the credit permanent would assist companies in research-intensive industries, because they need to know that they can count on the credit being there in order to plan their future.

Imagine if a home mortgage interest deduction was renewed on a stop-start basis by the Congress of the United States. The housing industry would be in chaos, and American citizens would not know whether they could count on it or not.

So I think it is time to make the R&D tax credit permanent, just as the home mortgage interest deduction is, and give American companies the tools that they need. We need to continue to expand this economy and keep it stunning. I urge my colleagues to support it.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE MARTIN

(Mr. HILL of Montana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL of Montana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with sadness to remember the life of a thoughtful young man from my district. Steve Martin was a friend to so many of us, and his mother, Thelma, is one of my dearest friends and supporters. Steve was taken from us several weeks ago in a tragic and horrifying accident that shocked us all.

I wish I could offer up some sense of what happened, but the truth is there is no earthly answer. Only God in His infinite wisdom knows His plan for each of us.

Steve had his mother's commitment to volunteerism and service to others. He never hesitated to roll up his sleeves and go to work to do what is right. Indeed, there is much to celebrate about a life that was filled with so much promise and was touched by so many people.

I sincerely hope that Thelma and her family can draw strength in these days ahead from those of us who care so deeply for them, and they will continue to trust in God's eternal promise.

CHINA CONTINUES TO THREATEN NATIONAL SECURITY

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, even though China threatened to nuke Taiwan, reports say the White House had planned to sell sophisticated satellites to a group of "Chinese businessmen."

Unbelievable. Thank God the Pentagon intervened. According to the New York Times, this group of Chinese businessmen turned out to be the Red Army. The Red Army, I say to my colleagues.

I have said it before, and I will say it again. With policies like this, I believe we should hire a proctologist and assign him to the White House to do some training with their bureaucrats.

I yield back what national security we have left.

TRIBUTE TO HAVIS HESTER

(Mr. DICKEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DICKEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity today to honor a public servant in Pine Bluff, Arkansas by the name of Havis Hester for his years of hard work and commitment, who has given himself to the citizens of Jefferson County, Arkansas.

Havis was born on April 29, 1933 on the porch of a one-room house in south